

L. LXIII e

18

50257/B



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30498661>

A SHORT
ACCOUNT
Of the Success of
WARM BATHING
IN
Paralytic Disorders.

By JOHN SUMMERS, M. D.
At BATH.



L O N D O N :

Printed for C. HITCH and L. HAWES,
in Pater-noster-Row. M DCC LI.

3/1/12



A S H O R T
A C C O U N T

Of the S U C C E S S of

Warm Bathing, &c.

THE Custom of bathing in Paralytic Disorders, which Success has introduc'd, having been establish'd for so many Years, I was somewhat surpriz'd and concern'd to find it discountenanc'd under the Sanction of so great a Name as Dr. *Mead*'s. The distinguish'd Character that Gentleman has always justly maintain'd in the learned
B World,

World, and the many great and eminent Services he has done in his own Profession, cannot but prejudice every Reader in favour of his Authority : But his known Humanity, and constant Application to improve the Science he presides in, are so universally admir'd, that it is certain he would with Pleasure retract any Opinion he had deliver'd, that might tend to hurt the Public, or not procure that Good he is so desirous of doing, and his extraordinary Talents have made him so able to promote.

In the * Preface to his last Work, he speaks, as he has always acted,

* Quocirea nec me puduit, quæ quandoque ipse, siue ignorantia, siue negligentia, perperam fecerim, monere, & agnoscere ; convenit enim ut ait Celsus simplex veri erroris confessio, præcipueque in eo ministerio, quod utilitatis causa, posteris traditur. Vid. Pref.

with

with so much Candour, and Zeal for Truth, that I am sure of his Pardon, when I venture to state a Matter of Fact, which will show he was mistaken in asserting, that * warm bathing is hurtful to all paralytic People.

This Sentence alone is sufficient to alarm many, and gain such Influence, as to deter them from pursuing a Method known to be useful. Many Cases might be produced, and many Instances are Here daily seen, that would prove the Utility of it; but as I would not oppose any single Authority from private Practice against so celebrated a Physician, I have chose to rest the whole Force this Expedient should have, upon Arguments that neither

* *Calidæ vero immerfi nes omnibus paralyticis nocent.*

Prejudice nor Interest can be suppos'd to produce, or be suspected to convey more Weight than the bare Relation supports ; I mean the Register of the General-Infirmary. There, when Patients are discharged, it is not what Condition the Physician concern'd reports they are in, but what the whole Committee sees and examines, which is recorded. This therefore is a Testimony to be relied on, and such a Proof as none can dispute. We have a great Variety of paralytic Patients, and upon exactly examining our Books, from the first opening the Hospital to this present Time, I find the Account to be as follows:

Admitted in Nine Years.		Cur'd	Much better	No better	Incurable	Dead
	} 310	57	151	45	42	12

From hence it appears, that more than two Thirds were either cured,
or

or received remarkable Benefit, and that only twelve died in the Space of nine Years. All these Patients were bath'd twice a Week, and many of them three Times. But what is very remarkable, is, that of those who were cur'd, or much better; above thirty were more than 40 years old, fifteen of whom were turn'd of 50, and five were 60 and upwards. Now let Conjecture hesitate, but Reason judge: And if to this Observation we add, the many Disadvantages these poor People lie under, such as the want of a good Air, and Exercise, which are found to be efficacious in these Cases, and that they are not allowed a proper Use of the Bath, which, as it is now regulated, subjects them to many Inconveniencies, which greatly obstruct the Good they might otherwise receive, and that for want
of

of a *sufficient Fund*, how long many are obliged to wait before they can be admitted ; by which Means, and the Negligence of Parishes to which they belong, the Distemper often becomes so fix'd and obstinate, that it is really surprizing that any Method should be of Service, especially when to all this, I must observe, that the Generality of our Patients come as Incurables from other Hospitals, where there are Men of the first Character, and consequently where the best Methods are used ; and yet with all these Obstacles, how strong in favour of Bathing is the above Account ? I do not take upon me to distinguish the several Species of Palsies, but as the Hemiplegia is the most obstinate, and the most skilful Practitioners so seldom succeed in it, I have selected what with Certainty I can vouch to
be

be of that Kind: Among the 310, 43 were Hemiplegia's, the State of whom is as follows:

Cured	Much better	Better	No better	Incurable	Improper	Dead
4	13	14	2	4	3	3

In Confirmation of this Success, I must not omit to mention, that among *Guidot's* two hundred Cases, there are 23 Paralytics, 17 were cur'd, 4 of which were Hemiplegia's, and the other 6 were much better by Bathing.* These are such incontestible Evidences, that whatever Appearances the Disorder might assume,

* *Guidot* says, in his Preface, that Mr. *John Revit*, an aged Man, hath very lately publickly testified his Cure of an Hemiplegia, in a Month's Bathing, by an Inscription round a very fair brass Ring, on the right Hand of the Entrance into the Queen's Bath out of the King's, after this Manner: "Thanks to God, I *John Revit*, his Majesty's Brazier, at 56 Years of Age, in this present Month of *July* 1674, in this Place recover'd a Cure of Health and Limbs, of the Dead Palsy on one Side from Head to Foot. Vid. *Guidot's* Preface."

or

or Prejudices the Faculty may conceive, yet they are strong enough, I should hope, to remove them all; for tho' Hypotheses, and reasoning on the Animal Structure, may be useful, yet such undoubted Experience must show us the Truth: And after this, whatever the Learned have thought or advanc'd on this Subject, must be little to the Purpose: We are every Day convinc'd, that Theory but seldom coincides with Practice, and rather misguides and lead us to Error, than assists us in investigating the true Cause, or fixing on the proper Method of curing Diseases. But yet to show that warm Bathing is not so absurd and inconsistent as some have imagin'd, notwithstanding the Relaxation which attends this Complaint, I shall present the Publick with the Opinions of the most celebrated Moderns, *Pitcairn, Boerhaave,*
and

and *Hoffman*, who declare, that the original Cause of Palfies arises from Obstructions in the nervous System. The first, after distinctly treating of the several Kinds, says, That an Obstruction of the Arteries of the Muscles, or the proper Influx of the nervous Fluids, will produce the several Symptoms; and mentions the common Experiment of tying the Nerve and Artery, either of which will bring on a Paralysis of those Muscles to which they were detach'd. *Boerhaave* says, That the common Coat of the Nerves, which arises from the Meninges, and is replete with various Kinds of Vessels, will often be inflam'd and obstructed; and so pressing the Nerves, prevent the Motion of their Fluids; and thereby be the Cause of the Resolution of the Muscles. And lastly, *Hoffman*, in several Places, says, That Palfies

proceed from the nervous Fluid being intercepted; and frequently mentions and recommends warm Bathing:*. But adhering to no Doctrine or Authority, let Bathing have *Experience* only to lead us to its Use, or show us the Danger of it: And if we take that for our Rule, what has been already observed, will, I should think, be sufficient to determine our Doubts and remove our Suspensions.

The Doctor observes, that he has known some, who after Bathing have died apoplectic; and I do not at all doubt it, but very much question, whether Bathing produced that Effect; for many Paralytics die in

* *N. Pifo* on this Subject, after enumerating the several Methods of Cure, says, Si adsint Balneæ calidæ naturales, præsertim nitrosæ, bituminosæ iis utendum, in eisque resoluta Membra, agitanda sunt: non ita probantur aluminosæ, quia nimium astringunt. De morbis cognosc. &c. Pag. 116.

that Manner, especially if the Disorder originally began in the Head: And indeed these Distempers are so nearly allied, as arising from affected Nerves, that they are frequently productive of each other, the Apoplexy bringing on a Palsy, and the Palsy ending in an Apoplexy. If we did not know this to be true in People who never saw *Bath*, the Effects of Bathing might perhaps be more strongly suspected and impeach'd; and yet what makes more to our Purpose, is, that not one of the 12 who died became apoplectic: And this I assert, after the most exact Scrutiny I could make; and upon my own Knowledge I can say, that ever since I have attended the House, which is near three Years, no one was ever seized with a Fit in the Bath, or immediately afterwards, tho' thro' the Inconveniences I have

C 2

hinted,

hinted, the Patients often stay an Hour, and sometimes longer; if Bathing therefore but remotely tended to such ill Consequences, we must have had frequent Examples in the Infirmary, more particular as we have great Opportunities of seeing the Consequence of this Method; for the Patients often remain with us 3, 6, 9, and sometimes 12 Months; and if I add what I think is very material, that we have only the Use of the Hot Bath*, when it is probable, that a more moderate one might sometimes be the best Beginning, and perhaps better succeed thro' the whole Course; at least Circumstances often arise, that must

* The moderate Warmth of the Cross Bath, as it does not so immediately affect, perhaps stimulate the Skin and Fibres, us'd to be in the highest Esteem, but thro' I know not what Caprice, it is not now so frequently us'd, as I think it deserves.

make

make us wish to have such a Change in our Power; I cannot but conclude that warm Bathing seems to be the proper Means of restoring Health and Vigour, in this enervated Situation, I am afraid to call it relax'd, for fear the Effect should inadvertently be taken for the Cause. It has been insinuated, that we might have done more Good, had we not so indiscriminately bath'd our Patients, which seems rather an Experiment than a prudent Use of Bathing; but when Men fall into a Prejudice, rather than sink under it, they lay hold on Straws to support them; for if it was an Experiment, all must acknowledge it ought to be continued, seeing how well and how often it has succeeded; and as Success has given us this Encouragement, we cannot but still persevere in the Use of it: I have therefore
only

only to say on this Head, that I shall be very glad, if any one can produce from the same Number of Patients, the same good Effects *without Bathing*.

A further Objection has been started, That all those who bathe, do at the same Time drink the Waters, to which all the Good obtain'd may be owing; at least the Virtues of Bathing cannot be so precisely ascertain'd. The real Force of this can only be determin'd by Observation; and it has been remark'd, that they who have bath'd have in general become better, and many of those who did not, either died Here, or soon after they left us, of which, there are some recent Examples; but what should have great Force as to this Point, is, that I have known several, who following the Orders they

they had in Town, only to drink the Waters, finding themselves no better, or rather worse, have ventur'd upon the Use of the Bath, and soon got great Benefit; and if we compare the Numbers reliev'd in the Hospital, with those in private Practice, I am well assur'd the great Odds would settle this Question much to the Advantage of Bathing: For tho' People in general come Here with such a Dread of it, rais'd by Injunctions laid on them in *London*, that one would think the Steams of the Baths were as poisonous as those of la Grotta de Cani, yet the many Instances of People who for some Time drink the Waters without Benefit, and afterwards have Recourse to Bathing with surprizing Success, will shew they have Qualities rather to be admir'd than dreaded.

In

In what Manner warm Bathing produces these good Effects in Palfies, may be difficult to explain, tho' it is fufficient to fhew, that Experience confirms the Propriety of it; but yet, as I have quoted fome Writers who authorize and approve of the Method, I fhall, in fupport of this Practice, fuggelt how I conceive the Fluids and Fibres may be fo acted upon, by the Means of warm Water, as to bring about a Change in the Animal Oeconomy, quite oppofite to its prefent Circumftances. Palfies appear to be, and really are, a State of Relaxation; but *that*, if the Doctrine of the Nerves is true, is but a Confequence of a previous Obftruction; or what will equally anfwer my Purpofe in this Enquiry, an Inability in thofe Organs, which are allow'd to be
the

the * Instruments of Sensation and Motion ; when therefore they are render'd incapable of performing their Office, Part of which is to continue and regulate the Circulation thro' the Muscles, the Arteries, upon whose Coats the nervous Filaments are distributed and inserted, lose their Force, the muscular Vesicles can no longer be inflated, and the Muscles themselves, for want of Support, and their only Directors, remain inactive, soon become cold, flaccid, numb, and often wasted ; in short, the Body in those Parts is in a paralytic State.

Now whatever can so penetrate as to open Obstructions in these

* The Modus agendi, or how the Nerves perform the important Parts of Sensation and Motion, I have no Business with ; all who have wrote on this Subject, have rather confus'd and perplex'd themselves, than improv'd others.

D

prin-

principal Organs, or any way restore them to Action, the consequent Feebleness, Langour and Inactivity of the Muscles will be remov'd, and these Cases either cur'd or greatly reliev'd.

The Effect of warm Water simply consider'd, we know is to relax, the Steams of it soften, and entering thro' the Skin, become a Fomentation to every Vessel and Fibre they reach, whereby their Diameters will be enlarg'd, and the contain'd Fluid have a greater Space to move in, and besides, may thereby be attenuated; even under this Circumstance, warm bathing may be justly looked upon as a Deobstruent. But we are led into an Opinion, I may call it a Mistake, that the *Bath Waters* have no other Effect than this; whereas if we consider these
Waters

Waters as impregnated with more active and mineral Principles, at the same Time that they act upon the Body as warm Water, their more powerful and volatile Contents will, by that Means, be better enabled to be convey'd to the remote Vessels, where penetrating the Coats, they stimulate them to Action, and mixing with the Fluids themselves, attenuate, dislodge, and move on the obstructing Cause, and thereby fit it to be discharged by its proper Secretion: Thus the several Organs will be restor'd to their respective Offices, and the Oeconomy of the whole Structure to be preserv'd*.

* Fernelius says of Palsies, *Curationem ita instituemus, ut ratione causæ, humorem nervos occupantem, ab illis alio revellamus derivemus, vel & corpore expergemus, aut alioquin discutiamus, vel absumamus*; and among other Ways, mentions warm bathing.

When we consider the Skin as the general Emunctory of the whole Body, and that a due Secretion from thence must contribute to the proper Action of the several Parts, and the general Vigour of the whole Constitution, it is likely that warm bathing only in this Light would be of Service in Palsies; but when we reflect, that it is more than probable, that the greatest part of the nervous System is spread upon its Surface, we may reasonably conclude, that the Water, and its Contents, will more immediately act upon, affect, and free the Nerves from Causes that hinder'd their Action: It would not perhaps be too refin'd an Opinion to imagine, that from hence, tho' the Cause arose from the Head, Success might be expected; for these extreme Branches may imbibe and convey to the very Seat of the Disorder

order a Power sufficient to remove it.

However, the Connection that subsists between the Skin and the several Organs of the Body, is so great, and Health is so often impair'd or restor'd, in proportion as that Secretion is obstructed or promoted, that there needs no Examples to confirm it ; but the habitual Looseness is so remarkable a one, that I cannot omit it. Here, when an increas'd Perspiration either naturally comes on, or can by Art be procur'd *, the Intestines always become stronger, the Acrimony of the Fluids is meliorated, in some Measure discharg'd, and the Diarrhæa lessen'd, according to the

* Diuturnæ Diarrhææ, irritis aliis, per diaphoretica promptissime sanari soleant. Baglivi, pag. 101.

known

known Maxim of Hippocrates, “Alvi laxitas, cutis densitas, cutis raritas, alvi densitas ;” and we find this Observation to be true, and that warm bathing proves very useful in these Circumstances. What therefore tends to free one oppress’d Organ, may relieve another, especially as this Emunctory purifies the whole Machine ; and when that is properly conducted, the several Parts are less interrupted, and better enabled to perform their respective Functions.

I am little solicitous whether warm Baths produce the Effects mentioned, in the Manner I have suggested or not, my Purpose being fully answer’d, in shewing that they really do Good ; and yet I think there is something beyond a bare Conjecture, that they do more than relax,
when

when we observe how frequently their Efficacy appears in the distorted Spine, where one or more of the Vertebrae are push'd outwards, and the lower Limbs become paralytic ; here warm bathing always succeeds, the Arch generally becomes less, and the Limbs are restor'd to their Use.

In short, if bathing serv'd to introduce Commotions in the Animal Oeconomy, or enfeeble the nervous System, we should, methinks, now and then see such Effects in the *Guides*, who are every Day in the Bath, and for several Hours together ; and yet it is notoriously known to be true, that they enjoy a better State of Health than the Generality of People, and are remarkable long Livers. Bathing in Health and Sicknefs, is no doubt a very different Situation ; but as
what

what has been observ'd, in the most apparent Languor, must justify its Use in that State, so the constant, continued, and long Use of it, in the *other*, not only without Inconvenience, but with an Addition of Health, will serve to strengthen the Proof, that it does not cause the Relaxation suppos'd; especially when we observe, that Persons, after much Fatigue, violent Exercise, and great Weariness, are refresh'd and invigorated, by warm Bathing more than by any other Means.

Upon the whole, tho' I must believe, that Dr. *Mead* founded his Opinion upon some Instances he had seen, yet I should imagine *They* were not sufficient for so general an Assertion, more particularly as the Account I have given, is so directly opposite: "Post Hoc, ergo propter
hoc

hoc, is a Maxim never to be relied on, and a Consequence that may prove fatal, to be observ'd: And from hence it is, that Effects have been attributed to the *Bath* Waters, they never produc'd; without some stronger and more evident Proofs therefore, I should think that warm Bathing, after such repeated Experience, ought not now to be discourag'd, especially as scarce a Day passes without seeing its salutary Effects, and all who have practis'd Here join to commend it.

Dr. *Baynard*, who liv'd above 30 Years at *Bath*, observes, that “ He
 “ has seen wonderful Cures done by
 “ Bathing, in the West India Gripes
 “ and Colics, where a Paralyfis has
 “ been general, with a total Loss
 “ of the Limbs.” And indeed, as he
 says, there have been wonderful
 E Cures

Cures. At this Time we have a remarkable Instance in the Infirmary, in a Youth about 19 Years old, who two Years ago was seiz'd with the West-India Colic, after a Voyage to those Parts: He was admitted a Patient *Here* in *September* last, and was the most miserable Object I ever beheld; his Arms hung entirely useless by his Sides, the Hands drop'd quite inwards, greatly emaciated, and the Fingers so strongly contracted, that it was not in the Power of Force to move 'em: The Legs were so wasted, as to appear only cover'd with Skin, and contracted up to his Buttocks; so that he always stood on his Knees: This Lad, by the Use of Bathing, soon began to recover, and has been for some Time able to walk *without Crutches*: He has now, the free Use of his Hands, the Legs and Arms
are

are become plump, and the flexor Muscles of the Thumbs have nearly regain'd their Size, tho' they were more wasted than I ever saw. I mention this Case, because it is not among the Number of discharg'd Patients, and as any Body may be satisfied of the Truth of it; He still remaining with us.

Here I must not neglect to observe, That the shaking Palsy is the only Species we have but little Success in; they are generally made worse by drinking the Waters, and Bathing but very seldom is of Service; for I find only one Patient, tho' we have had several, who was discharg'd better.

What Dr. *Mead* observes about drinking the Waters any considerable Time (even in Stomach Cases) that they bring on too great a Laxity

in that Part, is certainly just ; and we often find that Aromatics, Bitters and Steel Medicines are necessary to be added to the Waters, to prevent as much as we can, this Inconvenience; which seems to arise from the Vehicle (the Water) being so large in Proportion to the Contents, from which alone we expect Benefit : *A fortiori* therefore, I should conclude, That a Method, which introduces into the Habit the volatile Steel and Gas of Sulphur, would better answer our Purpose in Palsies, than loading the Stomach with such an unnecessary Quantity of warm Water, which must be more copiously drank and longer continued in this than in Stomach Cases.

* Warm Bathing effectually answers

* It is much to be wish'd, that we had *Vapour* Baths, which sometimes in this Case, but often in others, would be extremely beneficial.

this

this Intention, and prudently us'd, is attended with no Accident.

And now, as I have this Opportunity, I shall just mention, how serviceable warm Bathing is in the Gout, which is usually defin'd as seated in the Joints, and when it is regular is always in the Extremities, with some Degree of Inflammation; but its sudden Transition from thence to the more vital Parts so frequently happens, that the Nerves seem to be principally concern'd and affected.

The great Spirits and Vivacity People have, when Nature is able to unload its Incumbrance upon the Extremities, and the terrible Train of Symptoms that arises, when it is suffocated, and the Constitution not strong enough to throw off its Malignity,

lignity, are Proofs of its being nervous, especially as no other Inflammations, so instantaneously bring Relief, or disappearing, produce such fatal Changes: In Support therefore of warm Bathing in nervous Disorders, the great Number of People who come Here on this Occasion, and the Benefit, under a proper Regulation they receive, should convince us, that the Nerves are rather strengthen'd and fortified than relax'd by it; for if it brought on such a State, Nature would in this Case soon sink under its acquir'd Imbecility.

The wandering Erratic Pains are by this Methode either fix'd in the Extremities, or by gentle Perspiration, the Cause is in some Measure carried off: The Vomitings, Diarrhæa's and Headachs are remov'd by it, and the
stiff

stiff Limbs * become useful ; not so much by relaxing, as the volatile Parts rarefying and attenuating the thicken'd Defluxion, it is prepar'd to be carried off by its proper Secretion ; but if neglected, by frequent Returns of the Fits, it will be greatly accumulated, and harden'd into a cretaceous Substance, not to be remov'd : But at the same Time that the *Bath* Waters thus act upon the Fluids, they brace up and restore to their Tone the weaken'd, relax'd Fibres.

Bathing the Feet is, I think, a good and necessary Preparation for total Immersions, which being continued

* Effusi humoris pars, quæ per cutis meatus exire non potuit, in venas et lymphæ canales absorbetur : dum id, quod crassissimum est, membranis adhæret, et singulis doloris circuitibus, cumulus interdum in duritiem quasi cretaceam, concrevit, sensimque articulos opplet, et contundit. *Mead, de Podagra. Pag. 199.*

a proper Time, the Feet should afterwards be frequently immerg'd : And here I shall add, that Bathing the Feet, when the Gout is in the Head, Lungs, Stomach or Bowels, is sometimes not attended with Success; for unless we are cautious, instead of relaxing as Here we design, we unwarily prevent the Effect, and fix or aggravate the Symptoms ; which serves to corroborate all the Proofs I have brought, that the Waters do not bring on so hurtful a Relaxation ; the volatile Parts of which powerfully stimulating the Vessels, they exert a greater Force, and drive the Fluids from the Parts we intended to invite them to. This Effect, I believe too, partly arises from the great Heat of the Water ; for the Feet being put into a Water so much hotter than the Fluids of the Body, the Vessels are immediately affected by

the Action of Heat, which crisps up the Fibres, and propels the Fluids from the Extremities ; I should think therefore that the Waters of the King's and hot Bath should stand by a while before they are us'd, or the Cross Bath Water be employ'd in their Stead.

I have known some, who have bath'd their Feet without this Caution, complain, that just in that Part to which the Water reach'd, they felt a Sensation, like being tied round with a Cord; which seems to favour the Conjecture: But I shall leave this Matter, and what else I have advanc'd, to the farther Examination of more curious Enquirers.

F I N I S.

